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PERs: Schlesinger, Arthur M. (Gr.)  
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PERs: Kennedy, John F.

FROM J.F.K.'s INNER CIRCLE, GWT-1-01 US

THE HISTORY OF 'A THOUSAND DAYS'

# *The First Close Portrait of John Kennedy*

by ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER JR.

*This is the first of a series of articles, appearing exclusively in LIFE, taken from Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.'s book, A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House, which will be published this fall by Houghton Mifflin Co. Mr. Schlesinger, an eminent Harvard historian and Pulitzer prize winner, served the late President as special assistant and brings to his book knowledge gained as a member of the White House inner circle.*

**M**y first knowledge of John F. Kennedy went back to undergraduate days at Harvard 25 years before. His older brother, Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., was one of my classmates. His younger brother John arrived in Cambridge as a freshman when Joe and I were in our third years. In those days the freshman class put on a smoker each spring; and the Freshman Smoker of 1937 shamed the older classes with its prodigies of entertainment talent imported from Broadway and Hollywood. One learned that young Jack Kennedy was responsible for this triumph. I saw him from time to time in the Yard but do not recall that I ever exchanged a word with him. Joe and I finished Harvard in 1938, Jack two years later.

In 1946 I happened to find Kennedy had gone back to Boston to run for Congress. He and I must have renewed, or begun, our ac-

quaintance the following winter in Washington. A note from him in January 1948 started "Dear Arthur"; but my first distinct recollection of a conversation goes back to a political meeting in Harvard Yard during the presidential election that October, where we sat together and chatted while Congressman Kennedy waited his turn to go to the platform.

By 1950 he was plainly preparing to run for senator or governor in 1952. Which it would be depended on whether Paul Dever, the incumbent governor, chose to seek reelection or to challenge Senator Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. Kennedy's preference for the Senate was clear. As he said one day, gesturing at the State House, "I hate to think of myself up in that corner office deciding on sewer contracts." When Dever announced, in April 1952, that he planned to run again for the